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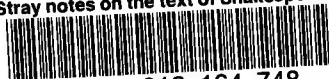
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STRAY NOTES
ON THE
TEXT OF SHAKESPEARE.

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ON THE

TEXT OF SHAKESPEARE,

BY

HENRY WELLESLEY, D.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF NEW INN HALL, OXFORD.

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THE TEMPEST.

ACT iii. SC. I.

“ *Fer.* I forget ;
But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours,
Most busy lest, when I do it.”

The Cambridge edition, page 41, gives the following list of variations :—

<i>Most busy lest</i>] F 1. <i>Most busy</i>	<i>Most busy left when idlest</i> Edd.
<i>least</i> F 2 F 3 F 4. <i>Least busy</i>	conj. See note (XIII).
Pope. <i>Most busie-less</i> Theobald.	NOTE xiii. III. 1 15. <i>Most busy</i>
<i>Most busiest</i> Holt White conj.	<i>lest, when I do it.</i> As none of
<i>Most busy felt</i> Staunton. <i>Most</i>	the proposed emendations can be
<i>busy still</i> Staunton conj. <i>Most</i>	regarded as certain, we have left
<i>busy-blest</i> Collier MS. <i>Most busi-</i>	the reading of F 1, though it
<i>liest</i> Bullock conj.	is manifestly corrupt. The spell-
<i>Most busy lest, when I do (doe</i>	ing ‘doe’ makes Mr. Spedding’s
<i>F 1 F 2 F 3) it</i>] <i>Most busy when</i>	conjecture ‘idlest’ for ‘I do it’
<i>least I do it</i> Brae conj. <i>Most</i>	more probable.
<i>busiest when idlest</i> Spedding conj.	

Spedding’s admirable emendation, *idlest* for *I doe it*, is a key to the whole passage, which only needs a more correct punctuation and orthography :—

“ *Fer.* I forget ;
But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours
Most, busy ; least, when idlest.”

Ferdinand is far from repining at his task, since it procures him that sweet sympathy which he would lack if he were unemployed. “ These sweet thoughts of Miranda’s pity, ‘ when she sees me work,’ refresh me in my labours. They refresh me even most when I am most busy, and least when comparatively speaking I am idlest.”

Owing to the double antithesis the construction is elliptical, and in dialogue would be stiff ; but at the close of a thoughtful soliloquy, and with a measured delivery, the effect would be in keeping with the exquisite tenderness of this Scene.

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL.

ACT ii. Sc. 2.

“*Vio.*

How easy is it for the proper-false

In women's waxen hearts to set their forms !”

Dr. Johnson says, “ This is obscure. The meaning is, *how easy is disguise to women* ; how easily does *their own falsehood*, contained in their *waxen* changeable *hearts*, enable them to assume deceitful appearances !”

Steevens offers two explanations of *proper-false*, viz. *fair and false*, or, *peculiarly false*.

In Knight's Shakspeare we have the following note :—

“ *Proper-false.* *Proper* is here *handsome*, as in Othello, ‘ This Ludovico is a proper man.’ This adjective is compounded with false, in the same way that we subsequently have *beauteous-evil*.”

The difficulty of affixing a satisfactory sense to that strange compound “ *the proper-false*” inclines me to believe it an invention of the compositor, the word

which baffled him being *impresses* ; and I would propose to read :

“ How easy is it for impresses false
In women’s waxen hearts to set their forms !”

i.e. women are easily *impressible*, for, as Isabella says, in Measure for Measure, Act ii. Sc. 4,—

“ We are as soft as our complexions,
And credulous to *false prints*.”

Viola is led to make a similar general remark, from the extraordinary success of her own disguise.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

ACT ii. Sc. 4.

“ *Ang.* Admit no other way to save his life
(As I subscribe not that, nor any other
But in the loss of question) that you, his sister,” &c.

I suspect we should read “the *top* of question,” a phrase borrowed from *the rack*. (See note on Hamlet, Act ii. Sc. 2, where it is applied to the highest stretch of the voice.) Angelo, in order to guard his perilous supposition in the safest form of words he can, protests that it is only put for argument’s sake, and that he would not *admit* it except upon compulsion as it were. He would submit to the height or extremity of torture first, and will not *subscribe* to it or to the like,

“ But in the top of question.”

Question, in Johnson’s Dictionary, is defined ‘examination by torture.’ “Such a presumption is only sufficient to put the person to *the rack* or *question*,

according to the civil law, and not bring him to condemnation." (Ayliffe's "Parergon.")

In French, Spanish, and Italian, this sense of the word is in more general use than it is with us.

Dr. Johnson says, "The *loss* of question I do not well understand, and should rather read 'But in the *toss* of question. In the *agitation*, in the discussion of the question.'" This is certainly an admirable conjecture, but this meaning is not quite so expressive of Angelo's vehement caution, nor is the phrase found elsewhere in our author.

ACT iii. Sc. I.

"*Duke.* . . . And here by this is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled."

Dr. Johnson's explanation of *scaled* is this: "To scale the deputy may be to reach him notwithstanding the elevation of his place; or it may be, to strip him and discover his nakedness, though armed and concealed by the investments of authority."

As Dr. Johnson has not decided in favour of either of these explanations, it may be suggested that there is a third metaphor, viz. that from the *scales* of Justice, not less agreeable to the context. The Duke may be understood to intimate that even-handed Justice will match the Deputy, and his corrupt doings (counter-acted by this plan) will be counter-balanced, weight for weight, *Measure for Measure*.

In *Coriolanus*, Act ii. Sc. 3, where the verb *scale* occurs, Dr. Johnson explains "*scaling* his present bearing with his past" as "*weighing* his past and present behaviour." And where Menenius in the same play (Act i. Sc. 1.) says to the citizens—

" I will tell you
A pretty tale, it may be, you have heard it :
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To *scale* 't a little more,"

the plain sense is, I will *weigh* and examine a little more what may be the *bearing* and application of this apologue ; though Steevens would bring in the old word to *scale* or *skail* in the sense of disperse or scatter. To apply to the Deputy in the sense of *disorder*, *disconcert*, *put to flight*, a verb which in its primary sense of *scattering* and *spilling* only governs words of number and quantity, such as heaps of corn, bottles of wine, manure, hair, wheat, &c., is surely harsh. As to the passage quoted from Hollinshed, "an army

scaled," it turns out that the verb is intransitive; the army *made off, skedaddled*.

ACT iii. Sc. 2.

"*Duke*. He who the sword of heaven will bear
Should be as holy as severe;
Pattern in himself to know,
Grace to stand, and virtue go."

The two last lines are so obscure that neither Johnson nor Steevens profess to understand them.

Show, for *know*, is a conjecture of Beckett, strongly confirmed by a parallel passage (quoted by Mr. Halliwell) in "Every Woman in her Humour," 1609:—

"He hath but shown
A pattern in himself, what thou shalt find
In others."

Nothing, however, has been done to get rid of "*virtue go*," a shift of the compositor so near to a right sense that it has kept its ground to the hindrance of all emendation.

Perhaps we should read—

“ Pattern in himself to show,
Grace to stand and undergo.”

As a verbal coincidence it may be noticed that Escalus had said of his colleague in the First Scene :

“ If any in Vienna be of worth
To *undergo* such ample *grace* and honour
It is Lord Angelo,”

and, oddly enough, the words *grace* and *undergo* occur in juxtaposition in Hamlet, Act i. Sc. 4 :—

“ (Be they as pure as *grace*,
As infinite as man may *undergo*).”

ACT iii. Sc. 2.

“ *Duke.*

O, what may man within him hide,
Though angel on the outward side !
How may likeness made in crimes,
Making practice on the times,
To draw with idle spider's strings
Most ponderous and substantial things !”

"Trade in crimes" is an emendation by Heath, in the Revisal, which at least supplies the wanting verb. Two other verbal alterations, not inconsistent with the handwriting of the period, would bring these two corrupt lines into better harmony with the context :

"O what may man within him hide,
 Though angel on the outward side !
 How may lewdness trade in crimes,
 Making practice oftentimes
 To draw with idle spider's strings
 Most ponderous and substantial things !"

The passage, amended as above, may be thus paraphrased :—O what wickedness may hypocrisy not hide within a holy exterior ! But, besides hypocrisy, how may *lewdness*, on the seat of justice, drive a profitable *trade* ! How may it compromise offences, tamper with justice, and traffic *in crimes* ! *oftentimes making practice*—i.e. plotting and contriving—to pervert and *draw* to its sinful purposes, by help of the flimsy cobwebs of the law, *with idle spider's strings* (according to the saying, "Leges similes arachnearum telis") *most ponderous and substantial* realities ; *things* such as weighty decisions and solid principles of justice and equity !

Isabel's invective at the close of the Second Act seems to bear out this interpretation :—

" O perilous mouths
 That bear in them one and the self same tongue
 Either of condemnation or approof ;

Bidding *the law* make curt'sy to their will ;
Hooking both right and wrong to the *appetite*,
To follow as it *draws* !”

Here *the law*, instead of being veiled under a cob-web, is openly named, and the sense of *to draw* is amply developed.

In the structure of both passages the early place of the verb throws the bulk of the sense upon the participles.

In Hamlet (Act i. Sc. 5) we have “*lewdness* in a shape of heaven;” here, “an angel on the outward side.”

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

ACT iii. Sc. 1.

“ *Biron.*

This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy ;
This Signior Junio's giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid.”

Thus read all the old copies in folio and quarto. The only correction needed is that of a single letter, *Julio* for *Junio*, Shakespeare having given the spelling correctly in the *Winter's Tale*, Act v. Sc. 2, where the effigy of Hermione is called “a piece many years in doing and now newly performed by that rare Italian master Julio Romano, who had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape :——”

We then at once recognise in this burlesque simile an allusion to the well-known portrait of the dwarf Gradasso introduced into the foreground of the “*Allo-cuzione*,” one of the frescoes of Julio Romano, in the hall of Constantine in the Vatican, wherein the Emperor is represented pointing out to his troops the apparition of the Cross in the heavens. This portrait

is truly a "giant-dwarf," of pigmy stature but Herculean muscular development, and is spoken of by Vasari as a very artistic production; meaning, perhaps, that it was well taken, and skilfully diminished by the accessories,

"E un nano che a' piedi di Costantino si mette una celata in capo è fatto con molt' arte." (Parte Terza, *Vita di Giulio Romano*.)

We know from Bellori and others that this dwarf's name was Gradasso, and that he belonged to Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, to whom the inimitable Berni dedicated the *Capitolo in lode di Gradasso*, composed at his request.

From the print of the 'Allocution' by Aquila, and the outline by Costa in *Il Vaticano*, vol. vii. p. 60, this dwarf, however true to nature, will be seen to be an ignoble adjunct to so serious an historical composition. But the painter, like others of the Roman and Venetian schools, would make no scruple of captivating the applause of patrons and the vulgar by introducing low and familiar images of questionable propriety. The Court-dwarf, done to the life, would delight the Cardinal and his household, while to this day the *cicerone* points it out to the *contadino* and the tourist. Like the "Vergognosa del Campo Santo," it is the one thing they carry away from the picture, and boast of having seen. Shakespeare may have heard of it in this way from some traveller, or he may have seen the Vatican

series in tapestry on the walls of one of our great Elizabethan mansions.

To have been painted by Giulio Romano, sung by Berni, and immortalized in Shakespeare as the type of Cupid, is indeed to be a "*giant-dwarf* :"

"Viva Gradasso Berettai da Norcia !"—BERNI.



ACT iv. Sc. 3.

" *Biron.*

A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd."

Theobald would alter *theft* to *thrift*. Warburton supports the common reading. "A lover in pursuit of his mistress has his sense of hearing quicker than a thief (who suspects every sound he hears) in pursuit of his prey." Not a single editor objects to *head*; and Farmer says, "The suspicious head of theft is the head suspicious of theft."

I must confess my inability to make good sense of the word *head*, which I believe to be the mistake of the compositor for *tread*:

"When the suspicious tread of theft is stopp'd,"

i.e. in the stillness of night, when the thief is stopped or startled at the sound of his own footfall.

"*Tread*," as a substantive, occurs earlier in this same scene:—

"O, if the streets were paved with thine eyes,
Her feet were too much dainty for such tread."

N.B. After taking every precaution against proposing any emendation as my own which originated

in another quarter, and after ascertaining that 'tread' was not among the various readings recorded by the Cambridge editors, it happened to me that in Coleridge's *Essays* (Lond. 1849, vol. i. page 108, where Biron's speech is given at length) I found the reading *tread of theft* instead of *head of theft*. There is no intimation of Coleridge having made the emendation, nor does it appear what was the edition of Shakespeare which he followed in the quotation. It may be that the modern compositor's instincts were offended with *head*, and taking it to be an erratum of his predecessor, he unhesitatingly corrected it to *tread*.

ACT V. Sc. 2.

"*Kath.* What, was your vizard made without a *tongue* ?

"*Long.* I know the reason, lady, why you ask.

"*Kath.* O for your reason ! quickly, sir ; I *long*.

"*Long.* You have a double *tongue* within your mask,
And would afford my speechless vizard *half*.

"*Kath.* *Veal*, quoth the Dutchman. Is not 'veal' a calf ?

"*Long.* A *calf*, fair lady !

"*Kath.* No, a fair *lord calf*.

"*Long.* Let's part the word.

"*Kath.* No, I'll not be your *half* :
Take *all*, and wean it ; it may prove an ox."

A writer, under the signature of X. X. X. in "Notes and Queries," Jan. 30, 1858, is at a loss to explain Katharine's introduction of *veal* (the Dutch mispronunciation of *well*), and remarks that "neither Collier, Ayscough, nor Routledge's new edition has any note on the subject."

It certainly does not appear that any of the commentators have thought it worth while to explain this miserable skirmish of puns. By attending to the words printed above in italics it will appear that they make up the syllables of Lord Longaville's name, compounded of *long calf veal*, or *langue half veal*. Katharine opens fire with the words *tongue* and *long* (pronounced like *langue* in French), and is charged with having a *double tongue*. "Well!" she exclaims, pronouncing *well*, as the Dutch do, *veal*. Then declining to "part the word" and be his *half*, i.e. the fair lady calf to the fair lord calf, she bids him *take all*; the whole calf, Lord Longaville, having been made out.

Shakespeare in this scene is but too true to the insipid chaffing carried on under the mask at the carnival and masquerade. One party insinuates by puns and allusions that he knows who the other is, in spite of his disguise.

MACBETH.

ACT v. Sc. 3.

“*Macb.*
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug
Would scour these English hence ?”

This is the present received text ; in which *senna* is represented to be an emendation by Rowe.

In the First Folio it stands,—

“What Rubarb, Cyme, or what Purgatiue drugge.”

The Second Folio, correcting the unmeaning *Cyme*, a chymical figment of the compositor, reads thus :—

“What Rubarb, Cæny, or what Purgative drug.”

In Malone’s copy of the Second Folio, *Cæny* is corrected in old pen and ink to *Cæne*.

The Third Folio repeats the reading of the Second, viz. *Cæny*.

The Fourth Folio, 1685, reads *Senna* : and *Senna*, which passes as an emendation by Rowe, without any

authority, and with a syllable too much for the verse, has held its ground ever since.

The contemporary MS. correction of *Cæne* for *Cæny* hit the pronunciation, though it missed the orthography, of the right word *Sene*, a monosyllable, the proper English word for the herb *Senna*. In the "Great Herbal" printed by Peter Treveris, in the "Herbal" printed by Thomas Petyt, in 1541, in the reprint of the same by William Copland, in Lyte's "New Herbal," 1578 and 1619, in Gerarde's "Herbal," 1597, there are whole chapters *Of Sene*. And it is *Sene* in Cotgrave and Howell's dictionaries, and Parkinson in his "Herbal," 1640, mentions two sorts of *Sene* tree—1. *Sene* of Alexandria; 2. the *Sene* of Italy. Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," even so late as the edition of 1660, page 378, mentions "Colutea, which Fuchsius, cap. 168, and others take for *Sene*, but most distinguish."

With respect to the *æ* in *Cæne* or *Cæny*, it is the way that the printers of that period took to express a double or a long *e*. We have *Scena* and *Scæna* indifferently in the First Folio. In "Supposes: a Comedie written in the Italian Tongue by Ariosto, Englished by George Gascoigne of Greis inne, esquire, and there presented, 1566," among "The names of the actors" we find a Siennese set down as "*Scenæse, a gentleman stranger*;" and the volume in which it is contained is "Imprinted by Abel Jeffes dwelling in

the Fore Stræte without Cræplegate, nære unto Grub-stræte, 1587.”

If therefore it should appear that *Senna* never occurs as an English word till long after Shakespeare wrote, it will not be a question here whether the modern spelling is to be followed according to the general practice, but whether, restoring to our author a word obsolete now but not in his day, we should not henceforth read :

“ What Rhubarb, Sene, or what purgative drug
Would scour these English hence ?”

KING HENRY IV. PART I.

ACT ii. Sc. i.

“ *Gads*. I am joined with . . . nobility and tranquillity,
burgomasters and great oneyers.”

The following various readings are given in the
Cambridge edition :—

<i>Oneyres</i> Q. i.	<i>oneeyers</i> Pope.	Hammer. <i>one-eers</i> Johnson conj.
<i>oneraires</i> Id. conj.	<i>moneyers</i>	<i>mynheers</i> Capell. <i>onyers</i> Ma-
Theobald (Hardinge conj.).	<i>seig-</i>	lone conj. <i>ones, yes</i> Collier MS.
<i>nors</i> Theobald conj.	<i>owners</i>	<i>wan-dyers</i> Jackson conj.

To add one more to the list, may not *oneyers* be
a mistake of the compositor for *mayors*? The strokes
of the letters correspond better than they do in *seignors*
and *mynheers*, either of which would equally be in the
sense of the context.

KING HENRY VIII.

ACT i. SC. i.

“I am the shadow of poor Buckingham ;
Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on
By dark’ning my clear sun. My lord, farewell.”

Dr. Johnson says : “ These lines have passed all the editors. Does the reader understand them ? By me they are inexplicable, and must be left, I fear, to some happier sagacity. If the usage of our author’s time would allow *figure* to be taken, as now, for *dignity*, *importance*, we might read :

“ Whose figure even this instant cloud puts out.

But I cannot please myself with any conjecture.

“ Another explanation may be given, somewhat harsh, but the best that occurs to me :

“ I am the shadow of poor Buckingham

Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on,

whose port and dignity is assumed by this Cardinal, that overclouds and oppresses me, and who gains my place ‘ By dark’ning my clear sun.’ ”

Without following Dr. Johnson in the task of explanation, I would suggest that the compositor read *enuies* as *even y^s*, i.e. *even this*, and would alter the line thus :

“ I am the shadow of poor Buckingham,
Whose figure Envy’s instant cloud puts on
By dark’ning my clear sun.”

Envy’s cloud is a common image with the early poets : “ Fell Envie’s cloud still dimmeth vertues ray,” in Spenser ; “ The envious clouds are bent to dim his glory,” King Richard II., Act iii. Sc. 3 ; and in Poole’s “ English Parnassus ” *Envy* is called “ That dark shadow, ever waiting on shining vertue.”

When Buckingham says that Envy’s cloud *puts on* his figure, the point seems to be, that Envy attacks only *shining* characters, and for this reason : Envy has no positive form of its own, but is ever on the watch to derive a form from the negation of merit. As the clouds of the sky assume visible shapes when the sun is behind them, so the cloud of Envy puts on the figure of the illustrious personage whose glories it intercepts, whose clear sun it darkens.

“ Envy does merit as its shade pursue,
And like the shadow proves the substance true.”

Here *merit* is ‘ Buckingham,’ and *Envy* is as the *shadow* representing the true *substance* of his figure.

Malone quotes the following passage in Greene’s

“Dorastus and Fawnia,” 1588, (a book which Shakespeare certainly had read,) as adding support to Dr. Johnson’s conjecture: “Fortune, *envious* of such happy success, turned her wheele, and *darkened their bright sunne* of prosperitie with the mistie cloudes of mishap and misery.” It seems however to add no less support to the proposed reading, with the substitution perhaps of *misty* for *instant*:

“Whose figure Envy’s misty cloud puts on
By dark’ning my clear sun.”

CORIOLANUS.

ACT i. Sc. 8.

The Field of Battle. Alarum. Enter Marcius and Aufidius. They fight, and certain Volscres come to the aid of Aufidius. Marcius fights till they be driven in breathless.

“*Auf.* Officious and not valiant! . . .
. . . . you have sham’d me
In your condemned seconds.”

For *condemned* Dr. Johnson proposes *contemned*: You have, to my shame, sent me help *which I despise*. Steevens is contented with the old reading, and explains it, *You have to my shame sent me help, which I must condemn as intrusive, instead of applauding it as necessary*.

There can be no doubt as to the general sense: but the phrase is so harsh and spiritless that I suspect *In your* to be corrupt, and would read:

“Officious and not valiant, you have sham’d me!
Begone, contemned seconds!”

ACT ii. Sc. 3.

“ *Cor.* Think upon me ? Hang ’em !

I would they would forget me like the virtues
Which our divines lose by ’em.”

None of the commentators have informed us what were the precepts by which Coriolanus here imagines that the Roman divines of his day are as much losers as he is by his example. I should rather suppose that he borrowed his simile from the Faculty, and that we should read :

“ I would they would forget me, like the virtues
Which medicines lose by time,”

the compositor having read *our divines* for *medicines*, and *them* for *time*.

ACT iv. Sc. 7.

“ *Auf.* . . . So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time :
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
To extol what it hath done.”

On the three last lines Warburton has this note :
 " This is a common thought, but miserably ill-expressed.
 The sense is, The virtue which delights to commend
 itself, will find the surest *tomb* in that *chair* wherein
 it holds forth its own commendations :—*unto itself*
most commendable, i.e. which hath a very high opinion
 of itself."

Warburton here seems to lose sight of the distinction between Virtue and Power : and because *the tomb of Power* would infallibly convey the meaning of the *grave of Power*, for Power ceases with life, the tomb is transferred to Virtue, whereby *tomb* is made to bear the less usual sense of monumental epitaph or posthumous eulogy delivered as from a chair or a rostrum. The context however speaks of actual Power, living, and in full exercise.

To any such harsh mode of interpretation I should prefer venturing to treat the whole line as corrupt, and to amend the passage thus :

. " So our virtues
 Lie in the interpretation of the time.
 And Power, unto itself most commendable,
 Hath orators accordant as a choir
 To extol what it hath done ;"

i.e. the credit we obtain for Virtues depends upon the opinion of the day for its value and power. And Power again, over and above the natural self-confidence

which is as an inward panegyric and commendation, never lacks the oratory of applauding multitudes to chime in with all its doings.

ACT iii. Sc. 1.

" *Men.* Fie, fie, fie !

This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

" 1 *Sen.* To unbuild the city, and to lay all flat.

" *Sic.* What is the city, but the people ?

" *All.* True,

The people are the city."

This last sentiment is that of the well-known fragment of Alcæus :

οὐ λίθοι, οὐδὲ ξύλα, οὐδὲ
τέχνη τεκτόνων αἱ πόλεις εἰσιν,
ἀλλ' ὅπου ποτ' ἄν ᾦσιν ἌΝΔΡΕΣ
αὐτοὺς σώζειν εἰδότες,
ἐνταῦθα τείχη καὶ πόλεις.

of which Sir William Jones has left a lengthened paraphrase, beginning—

“What constitutes a State ?
 Not high-raised battlements, or labour'd mound,
 Thick wall, or moated gate. . . .
 . . . No ; MEN, high-minded MEN, . . .
 . . These constitute a State.”

ACT V. Sc. 3.

“*Auf.* I am glad, thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour
 At difference in thee ; out of that I'll work
 Myself a former fortune.” [*Aside.*

Former with the indefinite article reads harshly.
 The antecedents of Aufidius make it more consistent
 with his part to read :

“ Out of that I'll work
 Myself a firmer fortune.”

ACT v. Sc. 5.

"Auf.

I . . . serv'd his designments
 In mine own person ; help to reap the fame
 Which he did end all his ; and took some pride
 To do myself this wrong."

Which he did end all his ; is not satisfactory. The conjecture *ear* for *end* is ingenious, and tempting as preserving the metaphor, but it would be necessary in order to apply it to the case, that we should not read *he*, but *we* :

"Which *we* did ear, all his ;"

If the *earing* had been by Coriolanus, he might claim the *reaping*.

As a simpler form of expressing the complaint of Aufidius, I would propose—

"I . . . help to reap the fame,
 Which he declar'd all his ;"

In the old handwriting *cl* might be mistaken for *d* and *r* for *n* ; so that *declar'd* might have been read *did end* by the compositor.

CYMBELINE.

ACT i. SC. I.

Cymbeline's Palace in Britain. Enter two Gentlemen.

“ I *Gent.* You do not meet a man but Frowns.
Our bloods no more obey the heauens
Then our Courtiers ;
Still seeme as do's the Kings.”

The above is the punctuation of the three first Folios. Dr. Johnson calls the passage difficult, and the modern editions by arranging and pointing the lines differently, have made it more so. But the chief difficulty has arisen from the word *heavens*, a misreading by the compositor for *Queens*, with the consequent false idea of *obeying the heavens*. Much confusion has also been created by explaining *bloods* as countenances, outward looks, the blood in the cheeks, instead of inward feelings, hearts, or hearts-bloods.

In the handwriting of the time the first letters of *Queens* and *heauens* are sufficiently similar to warrant

the supposition of mistake, and if we then take the passage, amended in that single word, in conjunction with what the same speaker says a few lines further on, we shall arrive at a consistent meaning.

“ I *Gent.* You do not meet a man but frowns.
 Our bloods no more obey the Queens
 Than our courtiers ;
 Still seem as does the Kings.
 All
 Is outward sorrow ; though, I think, the King
 Be touch'd at very heart.
 So is the queen,
 That most desired the match : but not a courtier,
 Although they wear their faces to the bent
 Of the King's looks, hath a heart that is not
 Glad at the thing they scowl at.”

The speaker is contrasting throughout the *frowns*, *faces*, *looks*, and *outward sorrow* of all, King, Queen, Courtiers, and Gentlemen, with their *bloods*, or inward *heart*. Of the Queen, “ who most desired the match,” and of her own son, not only the outward but the heartfelt sorrow is unquestionable, while the *looks* of the King, after the mishap of his step-son, are identical with those which are worn by the courtiers, not one of whom is not glad at heart ; though, so far as he is concerned, it is possible he may be touched in heart.

H A M L E T.

ACT ii. Sc. 2.

“*Ros.* But there is, sir, an aiery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapp’d for’t:——”

The meaning of the passage is correctly stated by Steevens to be “Children that perpetually recite in the highest notes of voice that can be uttered.” But both he and Dr. Johnson understand *question* as conversation, dialogue, asking a common question, whereas it is the old word, still in use in other languages, for *the rack*. The pulleys were strained and the witnesses hoisted to the utmost height, till the desired confession was elicited; and so the phrase, “top of question” came to be metaphorically applied; as for instance to the highest stretch of the voice, or the utmost force of an argument. See Note to Measure for Measure, Act ii. Sc. 4.

The *top of the bent* was a phrase of the same kind, borrowed from those bows which were not bent by

hand but by *a rack*. "These bows, being somewhat like the long bows in use amongst us, were bent only by a man's immediate strength, without the help of any bender or *rack*, that are used to others." (Wilkins's "Mathematical Magick.")

Hamlet employs this metaphor also, (Act iii. Sc. 2):

"They fool me to *the top* of my bent."

